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ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify the specific behaviors that enable performance assessment of cooperating teachers and to determine the degree of importance of each behavior as perceived by teacher educators and student teachers. During the 1982-83 academic year, data used in constructing the assessment instrument were gathered from elementary/secondary cooperating teachers and their student teachers, elementary/secondary principals, and college/university supervisors associated with the University of Northern Iowa student teacher program. The survey instrument was administered to 1162 cooperating teachers and 786 responses were received. The respondents indicated how much importance was placed on each of 43 critical behaviors based on a five-point Likert type scale. Tables display respondents agreement and and disagreement about cooperating teachers' critical behaviors in rank order. Recommendations are made on assessing and improving the performance of cooperating teachers. An example of the resulting 34-item assessment instrument is appended. (JD)

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CRITICAL BEHAVIORS OF COOPERATING TEACHERS
Key Persons in Quality Student Teaching Programs

(A Research Study)

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CRITICAL BEHAVIORS OF COOPERATING TEACHERS/
Key Persons in Quality Student Teaching Programs

INTRODUCTION

Concerns about the quality of preservice teacher education programs are the focus of national, state, and local education associations/agencies. It would be difficult to find many in the educational community including teachers, administrators, and college/university professors associated with teacher education who would disagree with the contention that improvement in most teacher education programs is needed.

The student teaching experience is usually considered by student teachers and most teacher educators to be the most valuable component in a quality teacher education program. Silberman (1970), in his analysis of American education stated that teachers when asked to place a value judgment on any aspect of their preparation program, generally cited student teaching as the most valuable, and sometimes the only valuable part of their professional preparation program. Despite its importance, there is no assurance that student teaching is a carefully controlled and supervised experience.

The recognized importance of student teaching focuses attention on the important role of the cooperating teacher, a key person in the student teaching experience. Johnson and Perry (1974) state that no other single person has as direct an influence in shaping the attitudes, skills, and philosophy of an entry-level teacher. Various studies cited by Lang, Quick,

and Johnson (1975) point to the crucial role of the cooperating teacher.

Competent Cooperating Teachers

Student teaching is a complex learning experience that requires careful supervision. Cooperating teachers must create a sustaining environment that will facilitate maximum development of student teachers. Dussalt (1970) believes that future teachers are significantly influenced by their general observations of professionals with whom they associate and by the specific guidance they receive from their cooperating teachers. Copas (1984) agrees that the value of the direct teaching experiences in schools depends on the quality of supervision provided by the cooperating teacher.

Cooperating teachers perform a wide range of supervisory tasks when directing student teachers. Present knowledge about behaviors of cooperating teachers and its relationship to behaviors of student teachers teachers, immediate or delayed, is inadequate. Cicirelli (1969), states that cooperating teachers can act in a manner which tends to restrict the range of behavior of student teachers or they can act in a manner which encourages student teachers to explore a full range of teaching behavior. According to Combs (1974), helping student teachers develop and modify their behavior is a basic responsibility of competent cooperating teachers. Milner (1959), believes that the success or failure of student teachers to become competent entry-level teachers rests largely with competent cooperating teachers.

Joyce and Weil (1980) believe that many or most student teachers will be less open to different models of teaching and less effective as teachers of tomorrow following their socialization into traditional patterns of teaching to which they are frequently exposed during student teaching.

The National Educational Association (1966), believes that cooperating

teachers must possess special skills and competencies beyond those required for effective classroom teaching. Supervising a neophyte requires skills not only in the analysis and evaluation of teaching but also in intellectualizing and sharing this knowledge and expertise in meaningful ways with student teachers.

Selection and Retention of Cooperating Teachers

According to Goodlad (1984), it is common practice for colleges of education supervisors to be somewhat non-selective as they work with school administrators in assigning student teachers to schools and to cooperating teachers. However, in the development and maintenance of a quality student teaching experience, the selection and retention of competent cooperating teachers are critical factors.

The decision to assign a student teacher to a cooperating teacher should be based upon demonstrated competence to work effectively with student teachers. However, there is little evidence in the literature and/or research to indicate the extent to which cooperating teachers are selected or retained on the basis of their demonstrated competence to fulfill cognitive teaching skills and affective behaviors.

Generally the selection of cooperating teachers is based on the recommendation of building principals. College/university supervisors may be consulted if they are knowledgeable about the previous performance of cooperating teachers. In some instances cooperating teachers are selected from those who volunteer.

Criteria for the selection of cooperating teachers have been suggested by leaders of professional associations and accrediting agencies. These criteria generally include: 1) highest professional certificate, 2) master's degree, 3) full approval for the area of specialization in which they are

currently teaching, 4) teaching in the area of specialization, and 5) three or more years of successful teaching experience with at least one year in their current assignment.

In addition to these criteria, subjective judgment is usually employed in the selection and retention of cooperating teachers. A major concern which complicates the selection of cooperating teachers is the fact that these criteria do not always result in effective supervision. Generic behaviors of cooperating teachers which enhance the quality of student teaching experiences need to be identified and demonstrated by cooperating teachers if the quality of supervision is to be improved.

Need for the Study

The use of public and private elementary and secondary schools to provide settings for student teachers has placed the major responsibility for the supervision of student teachers on classroom teachers. Therefore, teacher education institutions have a responsibility to establish a process to assess the performance of cooperating teachers that will upgrade the quality of student teaching experiences. These investigators believe that methods and instruments need to be developed to describe and assess the behaviors of cooperating teachers. These would constitute criteria of a higher order than the five which originated with professional associations and accrediting agencies. In so far as these investigators were able to determine, implementation of a system to assess the performance of cooperating teachers called for by teacher educators has not been developed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was two-fold: 1) to identify the specific behaviors of cooperating teachers to be assessed and 2) to determine the degree of importance of each of the behaviors of cooperating teachers as perceived by teacher educators and student teachers.

PROCEDURES

Instrument Construction

Previous studies were useful in selecting behaviors to be included in the survey instrument used in this study. Roth (1960) identified effective and ineffective behaviors of cooperating teachers using the critical incident technique. Behaviors of cooperating teachers as perceived by student teachers were identified by Farbstein (1965). Stoumbis (1966) sought to determine the role of the cooperating teacher by comparing those roles suggested by persons directly associated with a student teaching program. Wright (1966) conducted a study in which he identified some of the crucial behaviors of cooperating teachers and then isolated those behaviors believed to be effective and ineffective. The purpose of a study by Decoteau (1966) was to determine important duties performed by cooperating teachers. Foster (1968) did a study to explore the role of the cooperating teacher by comparing perceptions of cooperating teachers, student teachers, and college/university supervisors. Nearly 20 years later, Copas (1984) identified critical requirements for cooperating teachers.

Critical behaviors of cooperating teachers were abstracted from research/studies and the literature in the field to construct a 43 item instrument for use in this study. Each behavior included from 2 to 8 descriptors to provide a common point of reference and a broad definition to accommodate the different experience levels of the respondents.

METHOD

Population

During the 1982-83 academic year, data were gathered from elementary/secondary cooperating teachers and their student teachers, elementary/

secondary principals, and college/university supervisors associated with the University of Northern Iowa student teaching program. The Iowa school systems to which student teachers were assigned ranged in size from 675 to 33,185 students in kindergarten through grade twelve. The survey instrument was administered to 1162 cooperating teachers by the resident coordinators of student teaching. A total of 786 responses were received (67 percent).

Table I reflects the population groups, the numbers in each group, and the percent of the total population represented by each of the five groups of respondents.

Insert Table I about here

Analyzing the Data

The respondents were instructed to indicate the degree of importance they placed on each of 43 critical behaviors based on a five-point Likert type scale (1 very low degree of importance and 5 a very high degree of importance). A composite mean and the chi square value for each of the 43 critical behaviors was generated.

The composite means were used to rank order the 43 critical behaviors. A composite mean of 3.75 or greater was arbitrarily chosen by the investigators as the criterion for determining those behaviors to be significantly important to assess the performance of cooperating teachers.

If the associated probability was less than 0.05, the five groups of teacher educators and their student student teachers placed a different degree of relative importance on each of the 43 critical behaviors. The value of chi square was considered to be significant if the probability that it occurred by chance was 0.05 or less.

FINDINGS/DISCUSSION

There was agreement (chi square value greater than 0.05) among the five groups of respondents on 19 of the 34 behaviors that obtained a composite mean of 3.75 or higher.

Insert Table II about here

There was disagreement (chi square value of 0.05 or less) among the five groups of respondents (identified by groups 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) on 15 of the 34 critical behaviors that obtained a composite mean of 3.75 or higher.

Insert Table III about here

The role of the cooperating teacher on which there was some disagreement among the five groups of respondents is reflected in the "Groups that Disagree" column of Table III. For example, group 1 ($\overline{X}$ = 4.647) and group 5 ($\overline{X}$ = 4.631) placed a higher relative degree of importance on the critical behavior "Helps the student teacher development management and classroom discipline/control strategies" (composite $\overline{X}$ = 4.515/rank order #5) than did group 2 ($\overline{X}$ = 4.413), group 3 ($\overline{X}$ = 4.373) and 4 ($\overline{X}$ = 4.370).

Note: the table listing the composite mean and rank order of each of the 43 critical behaviors by the five groups of respondents is available upon request.

Even though there was some disagreement among the five groups of respondents, these 15 behaviors are included in the assessment instrument (Appendix "A") since they met the 3.75 mean criterion established by these investigators.

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS

There was considerable consistency among the five groups of respondents and the relative degree of importance each group placed on each of the 43 critical behaviors. For example, on the behavior: "the effective cooperating teacher POSSESSES PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS/PERSONAL QUALITIES" (composite mean of 4.605) (rank order number one), groups 1, 2, and 5 ranked the behavior as number one and groups 3 and 4 ranked the behaviors as number two. On the behavior: "the effective cooperating teacher HELPS THE STUDENT TEACHER TO BECOME KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT DISTRICT CURRICULUM" (composite mean of 3.139) (rank order number 43), groups 3 and 5 ranked the behavior as number 43, group 2 ranked the behavior as number 42.5, and groups 1 and 4 ranked the behavior as number 42.

The results of this study provide useful information for establishing criteria for the retention of cooperating teachers. Critical behaviors of cooperating teachers which relate to the supervision of student teachers have been identified. Instrument(s) (see Appendix "A" for sample) need to be constructed to assess the extent or degree to which these critical behaviors are demonstrated by cooperating teachers. Behaviors which pertain to the development of both cognitive and affective behaviors need to be included in an instrument to assess the performance of cooperating teachers.

Further study is needed to determine if assessment of critical

behaviors of cooperating teachers by teacher educators and student teachers would result in higher quality student teaching experiences and more competent entry-level teachers. Empirical findings that correlate with a higher quality student teaching experience would provide justification and rationale for requiring cooperating teachers to meet established retention criteria.

Use of reliable criteria for the retention of cooperating teachers can result in the identification, recognition and rewarding of public/private school teachers who are making outstanding contributions to teacher education programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Teacher education institutions, in cooperation with and in partnership with cooperating teachers and principals implement a system to assess the performance of cooperating teachers. These assessments would create a performance profile on cooperating teachers who supervise student teachers. The profile would be a valuable tool to principals and college/university supervisors in the assignment of student teachers to the most effective cooperating teachers.

2. Local, state, and national norms could be generated that would be useful to teacher education institutions to identify a cadre of cooperating teachers that would enhance the quality of supervision provided by cooperating teachers and identify "master" teachers as "role models" for student teachers.

3. Professional development sessions should be arranged to fulfill the following purpose:

> require practicing or potential cooperating teachers to participate in a series of inservice sessions to improve their supervisory skills and strategies to more competently fulfill their role expectations implied by each of the 34 critical behaviors of effective cooperating teachers . . . key persons in a quality student teaching program.

TABLE I
Number and Percent of Teacher Educators and Student Teachers in Sample by Population Groups

Group	Teacher Educators/Student Teachers	Number	Percent of Total Sample
1	Early childhood, Elementary and Middle School Cooperating Teachers and Student Teachers	259	33
2	Special Education Cooperating Teachers and Student Teachers.....	47	6
3	Secondary/Postsecondary Cooperating Teachers and Student Teachers.....	237	30
4	Special Area Cooperating Teachers (Art, Music, Physical Education) and Student Teachers.....	134	17
5	Elementary/Secondary Principals and College/University Supervisors.....	109	14
	Total (all groups)	786	

TABLE II

Rank Order of Critical Behaviors of Cooperating Teachers on Which There Was AGREEMENT Among ALL Five Groups of Respondents Based on Composite Means

Critical Behaviors of an Effective Cooperating Teacher	Composite Mean	Rank Order	Chi Square
Possesses Professional Characteristics/Personal Qualities	4.605	1	0.6738
Assists the student teacher in making the transition from college student to student teacher	4.569	2	0.2882
Provides freedom to teach	4.539	3	0.1777
Helps the student teacher develop motivation strategies	4.520	4	0.7214
Understands his/her supervisory roles	4.510	6	0.1724
Willingly fulfills professional responsibilities	4.457	9	0.2486
Helps the student teacher develop a positive learning environment	4.428	10	0.3661
Conducts purposeful conferences with student teacher	4.427	11	0.2265
Accepts the student teacher as a co-teacher	4.410	13	0.1339
Helps the student teacher develop a wholesome self-image	4.406	14	0.2014
Helps the student teacher develop human relations strategies	4.259	19	0.0619
Helps the student teacher develop supervising/ monitoring strategies	4.132	21	0.596
Helps the student teacher develop objective instructional plans/lesson design strategies	4.105	22	0.3006
Helps the student teacher develop communication strategies	4.101	23	0.2291
Is capable of self-assessment of own professional development as a supervisor of student teachers	4.086	24	0.3661
Provides a flexible work schedule for the student teacher	4.082	25	0.1925
Helps the student teacher develop role awareness and ethics of the profession	4.048	26	0.0535
Helps the student teacher develop problem-solving/ decision-making strategies	3.951	28	0.0582
Helps the student teacher develop evaluation strategies	3.907	31	0.2291

TABLE III

Rank Order of Critical Behaviors of Cooperating Teachers on Which There Was DISAGREEMENT Among ALL Five Groups of Respondents Based on Composite Means

Critical Behaviors of an Effective Cooperating Teacher	Composite Mean	Rank Order	Chi Square	Groups That Disagree
Helps the student teacher develop management and classroom discipline/control strategies	4.515	5	0.0251	1,5
Provides continuous and comprehensive evaluation of student teacher	4.490	7	0.0062	1
Provides for the gradual induction of the student teacher into the teaching process	4.483	8	0.0001	1, 5
Orients the student teacher to his/her role and expectations during the student teaching experience	4.418	12	0.0480	1
Develops and maintains excellent helping relationships	4.361	15	0.0140	1, 2
Is an exemplary role model of a "good" teacher	4.354	16	0.0362	1, 5
Helps the student teacher develop effective instructional strategies	4.295	17	.0079	1, 5
Helps the student teacher develop his/her own teaching style	4.291	18	0.0076	1
Helps the student teacher to become knowledgeable about learners	4.160	20	0.0067	1
Helps the student teacher develop assessing/diagnosing strategies	4.039	27	0.0003	1
Helps the student teacher understand his/her role in curriculum planning and development	3.930	29	0.0170	1, 5
Provides a facilitating environment for the student teacher	3.914	30	0.0422	1, 2, 5
Has the capacity for sharing "self" with the student teacher	3.778	32	0.0253	1, 5
Shares educational, psychological, and sociological information about learners with student teachers to better understand achievement levels	3.757	33	0.0092	1
Helps the student teacher to develop multicultural/ nonsexists strategies	3.751	34	0.0085	1, 2, 5

Note: Group identification numbers

1. Early childhood, elementary, middle school coooperating teachers and student teachers
2. Special education cooperating teachers and student teachers
3. Secondary/postsecondary cooperating teachers and student teachers
4. Special area cooperating teachers and student teachers
5. Elementary, secondary, and postsecondary supervisors/administrators (i.e., college/university supervisors/elementary and secondary principals)

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APPENDIX "A"

A S S E S S M E N T

of

BEHAVIORS OF EFFECTIVE COOPERATING TEACHERS

Name: _____ Evaluator: ( ) College/University Supervisor
Cooperating teacher (check one) ( ) Student Teacher
( ) Principal

Definition: The effective cooperating teacher is an exemplary supervisor and "role model" of a "master" teacher.

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS: Indicate your assessment on a mark-sense answer sheet using the following performance scale..1..unsatisfactory, 2..low degree of effectiveness, 3..effective, 4..high degree of effectiveness and 5..outstanding

Effective Cooperating Teacher Behaviors

1. Possesses professional characteristics/personal qualities
2. Assists the student teacher in making the transition from college student to student teacher
3. Provides freedom to teach
4. Helps the student teacher develop motivation strategies
5. Understands his/her supervisory role
6. Willingly fulfills professional responsibilities
7. Helps the student teacher develop a positive learning environment
8. Conducts purposeful conferences with the student teacher
9. Accepts the student teacher as a co-teacher
10. Helps the student teacher develop a wholesome self-image
11. Helps the student teacher develop human relations strategies
12. Helps the student teacher develop supervising/monitoring strategies
13. Helps the student teacher develop effective instructional plans/lesson design strategies

14. Helps the student teacher develop communication strategies

15. Is capable of self-assessment of own professional development as a supervisor of student teachers

16. Provides a flexible work schedule for the student teacher

17. Helps the student teacher develop role awareness and ethics of the profession

18. Helps the student teacher develop problem-solving/decision-making strategies

19. Helps the student teacher develop evaluation strategies

20. Helps the student teacher develop management and classroom discipline/control strategies

21. Provides continuous and comprehensive evaluation of his/her student teacher

22. Provides for the gradual induction of the student teacher into the teaching process

23. Orients the student teacher to his/her role and expectations during the student teaching experience

24. Develops and maintains excellent helping relationships

25. Is an exemplary role model of a "good" teacher

26. Helps the student teacher develop effective instructional strategies

27. Helps the student teacher develop his/her own teaching style

28. Helps the student teacher become knowledgeable about learners

29. Helps the student teacher develop assessing/diagnosing strategies

30. Helps the student teacher understand his/her role in curriculum planning and development

31. Provides a facilitating environment for the student teacher

32. Has the capacity for sharing "self" with the student teacher

33. Shares educational, psychological, and sociological information about learners with student teacher to better understand achievement levels

34. Helps the student teacher develop multicultural/nonsexists strategies